

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 192130

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE FROM HARROP

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ECON, US, UG

SUBJECT: SENATE PASSES TRADE EMBARGO ON UGANDA

1. BY A 73-1 VOTE THE SENATE APPROVED A WEICKER/HATFIELD AMENDMENT TO THE IMF AUTHORIZATION ACT WHICH IMPOSES AN ALMOST TOTAL TRADE EMBARGO AGAINST UGANDA. THE AMENDMENT WHICH INCLUDES BOTH IMPORTS AND EXPORTS, PROVIDES AN EXEMPTION WHICH WOULD PERMIT FOOD SALES TO UGANDA AND FOR LIFTING THE EMBARGO WHEN THE PRESIDENT DETERMINES THAT THE GOU IS NO LONGER ENGAGED IN A CONSISTENT PATTERN OF GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. AN ATTEMPT BY SENATOR CHURCH TO SUBSTITUTE A NON-BINDING RESOLUTION OF CONDEMNATION OF UGANDA WAS DEFEATED 46-30.

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2. THE IMF AUTHORIZATION ACT NOW GOES TO CONFERENCE WHERE IT IS UNLIKELY THE AMENDMENT WILL BE ALTERED OR REMOVED. WHEN IT GOES TO THE HOUSE A POINT OF ORDER MIGHT BE RAISED AS THE AMENDMENT IS NOT GERMAINE. YET GIVEN THE 377-0 PASSAGE OF HOUSE CON RESOLUTION 612, THE AMENDMENT IS LIKELY TO HAVE ALMOST UNANIMOUS SUPPORT. THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF A PRESIDENTIAL VETO OF THE ACT WITH THE WEICKER/

HATFIELD AMENDMENT APPENDED.

3. IN THE PAST, AMIN HAS MANAGED TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS, AND HAS NOT RETALIATED AGAINST CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTIONS CONDEMNING UGANDA. AS THIS LEGISLATION, IF ENACTED, WOULD IMPOSE A MANDATORY EMBARGO, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT AMIN WILL SEEK SOME FORM OF RETALIATION. THE ONLY READILY AVAILABLE TARGET, OF COURSE, ARE THE SOME 200 AMERICANS RESIDENT IN UGANDA. WE HAVE ALERTED THE FRG EMBASSY IN KAMPALA (VIA BONN) OF THE SENATE ACTION AND REQUESTED THEM TO INFORM THE AMERICAN RESIDENTS THROUGH THE WARDEN SYSTEM. THE AMERICANS WILL AGAIN BE ASKED TO RECONSIDER THEIR DECISION TO REMAIN IN UGANDA IN LIGHT OF POSSIBLE GOU RETALIATION.

4. PRIOR TO THE SENATE VOTE, WHICH CAME UP VERY SUDDENLY, WE WERE ABLE TO REACH A NUMBER OF KEY SENATORS TO WARN ABOUT THE AMCIT PROBLEM, BUT TO NO AVAIL. WE HAVE RELEASED PRESS GUIDANCE AS FOLLOWS, DESIGNED TO MAKE CLEAR THE EXECUTIVE WAS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH THIS RISKY LEGISLATIVE ACTION:

BEGIN TEXT OF GUIDANCE.

THE ADMINISTRATION HAS REPEATEDLY STATED ITS AB-
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HORRENCE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES OF THE IDI AMIN GOVERNMENT AND HAS EXPLAINED IN TESTIMONY BEFORE BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS THE ACTIONS IT HAS TAKEN TO DIS-ASSOCIATE THE U.S. FROM THE UGANDAN REGIME. THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN KAMPALA WAS CLOSED IN 1973 AND SINCE THAT TIME WE HAVE RECOMMENDED THAT AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAVE UGANDA. AMERICAN EXPORT LICENSING AND VISA POLICIES ARE CAREFULLY ADMINISTERED TO AVOID ANY SUPPORT OF THE REPRESSIVE POLICIES OF THE UGANDAN GOVERNMENT. THE U.S. HAS SUPPORTED APPROPRIATE ACTION REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS IN UGANDA IN MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION; WE BELIEVE THAT SUCH MULTILATERAL PRESSURES ARE MOST LIKELY TO HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT UPON HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS. THE ADMINISTRATION HAS NOT SUPPORTED A TRADE EMBARGO BECAUSE WE HAVE BELIEVED THAT SUCH ACTION WOULD NOT IMPROVE THE SITUATION IN UGANDA. WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE MOTIVATIONS OF THE SENATE IN WISHING TO RESPOND TO THE ATROCIOUS MISTREATMENT OF HUMAN BEINGS IN UGANDA. END OF TEXT GUIDANCE. VANCE

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